
Chapter CCLXXVII.¹

SERVICE OF THE HOUSE.

1. Compensation of employees. Sections 3600, 3601.

3600. While customary to grant the widow of an employee of the House an amount equal to one-half of a year's salary, in exceptional instances the House has authorized payment of the full amount of the annual salary.—On December 21, 1916,² Mr. James T. Lloyd, of Missouri, by direction of the Committee on Accounts, offered the following, as privileged resolution:

Resolved, That the Clerk of the House is directed to pay, out of the contingent fund of the House, to Lenora McCall Courts, widow of James C. Courts, late clerk to the Committee on Appropriations, a sum equal to one year's salary at the rate he was receiving by law at the time of his death, said sum to be considered as including funeral expenses and all other allowances.

In discussing the resolution, Mr. Lloyd explained:

Mr. Speaker, this is a little different resolution from what we have been offering on the death of an employee of the House. Mr. Courts, as you know, was the clerk to the Committee on Appropriations. He had been connected with the Committee on Appropriations for 39 consecutive years, during all administrations, since he was first employed. Since 1884 he was the clerk of that committee until the time of his death last September.

He devoted his whole time and attention during all those years to the service of that committee and the Government, and it is safe to say that no man connected with this House, either within the Chamber or out of it, was more faithful and valuable and meant more to the Government, so far as his work was concerned, than Mr. Courts, and we think that under the circumstances it is but right that we should allow a year's salary to his widow, just as we would in the case of the widow of a Member of Congress, if a Member of Congress died. Heretofore in the case of other employees we have allowed a sum equal to six months' salary.

I am inclined to believe that the resolution is a highly proper one under the circumstances, and I want it distinctly understood, so far as the Committee on Accounts is concerned, that we are not offering this as a precedent for the future. And yet if it is construed as a precedent in the future, there is no danger, because this individual served 39 years, and if anybody else served 39 years it would not be a serious burden to the Government if a year's salary were allowed.

¹Supplementary to Chapter CXLVII.

²Second session Sixty-fourth Congress, Record, p. 648.

3601. On July 9, 1921,¹ the House had under consideration the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Clerk of the House of Representatives be directed to pay, out of the contingent fund of the House, to Nellie May Phillips, widow of Herman A. Phillips, late Journal clerk of the House of Representatives, a sum equal to one year's salary as Journal clerk, and that the Clerk be further directed to pay out of the contingent fund the expenses of the last illness and funeral of said Herman A. Phillips, such expenses not to exceed \$250.

with a proposed amendment offered by the Committee on Accounts as follows:

Strike out "one year's" and insert in lieu thereof "six months," so that it will read "a sum equal to six months' salary as Journal clerk."

In the course of debate on the resolution, Mr. Clifford Ireland, of Illinois, chairman of the Committee on Accounts, who had presented the resolution, said:

Mr. Speaker, this is the usual resolution for the dependents of a deceased employee of the House, with this exception, that the original resolution as drawn provided for the payment of one year's salary to the dependents of the deceased employee, and the custom for ordinary employees of the House has been to pay six months' salary and funeral expenses not to exceed \$250 in amount. It has been found to be the precedent, however, of the House that officers of the House and employees of the so-called Clerk's desk have been paid a full year's salary. In committee this resolution was amended to conform to the ordinary resolution. I gave notice before the committee at that time that I should oppose the amendment, and do so now. I yield to the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Mann.

Mr. James R. Mann, of Illinois, opposed the amendment and said:

Mr. Speaker, the practice of the House has been to pay a year's salary to the widow or dependents of a Member of the House, six months' salary to the ordinary employee of the House, and a year's salary to the widow or dependents of one of the elected officers of the House. Apparently the precedents are that the practice has been to pay a year's salary to the widow or dependents of clerks at the desk, including the Official Reporters of the House. The precedents are not numerous. The last time an officer or clerk at the desk died was in 1887. A reading clerk died and the House proceeded to pay the widow of the reading clerk one year's salary. Prior to that time Mr. Hincks, one of the Official Reporters of the House, died and the Committee on Accounts did not recommend a year's salary, but the House increased the amount and paid a year's salary to the widow of the reporter. Again, when Mr. McElhone, one of the Official Reporters, died, the Committee on Accounts recommended that his widow be paid one year's salary, and the House so voted, and she was so paid.

I brought Herman Phillips here to the House nearly 24 years ago as assistant Journal clerk. Shortly afterwards he became Journal clerk of the House. From then on he was Journal clerk during all of the time except when the Democratic side of the House was in control of the House. He was an expert man in the House, both as a Journal clerk and as an aid in parliamentary work. I think the House can afford to follow the few precedents which have been set, there being no precedents on the other side, and pay his widow as the widow of a clerk at the desk, a full year's salary; and I hope that the amendment reducing the amount to six months' salary may be defeated.

The question being taken on the amendment proposed by the committee it was decided in the negative. The resolution was then agreed to without amendment.

¹First session Sixty-seventh Congress, Record, p. 3487.